



## **Committee for Public Counsel Services Mental Health Litigation Unit**

**{Effective March 1, 2005}**

**To Persons Admitted Involuntarily under G.L. c. 123, § 12(b)**

### **Your Right To Counsel**

Dear Sir or Madam:

You have been admitted to this facility because the admitting physician believes that you suffer from a mental illness and that you would be dangerous to yourself or others, or would be unable to care for yourself, if not hospitalized. The law permits the hospital to hold you for up to three (3) business days. At the end of this three-day period, the hospital must either allow you to leave, if you wish, or ask a court to commit you for up to an additional six (6) months.

You are entitled to the services of a trained mental health attorney, at no cost to you, throughout the three-day period and at a commitment hearing if one is necessary. **THIS ATTORNEY WILL REPRESENT YOU AND ONLY YOU!** He or she will fully explain and help you to exercise your legal rights in the admission and commitment process, including your right to an emergency hearing if you have reason to believe that your admission was improper. He or she will work with you to prepare the best possible defense if the hospital files a commitment petition. The attorney can also help you to find a legal advocate to assist you in respect to certain other rights to which you are entitled while in the hospital.

If you would like to have an attorney assist you, please tell the hospital staff immediately. The hospital will contact this office and we will assign an attorney to represent you. You should expect the attorney to visit with you no later than the next business day.

If you would like additional information about your right to counsel, please call the

**MENTAL HEALTH LITIGATION UNIT**

**(617) 482-6212 or (800) 882-2095**